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## Contra Moderates Seek to Limit the Role Of Group's Former Somoza Guardsmen

### FOREIGN INSIGHT

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MIAMI—A meeting here of Nicaraguan rebel leaders bickering over control of their organization could strongly influence the battle between President Reagan and Congress over a \$100 million Contra aid package.

Behind closed doors in a secret location, two moderate rebel leaders are demanding from a third conservative chief radical organizational changes that would make military personnel answer to civilians for conduct of the war against Nicaragua's Sandinista regime, for human-rights violations and for alleged corruption. Former officers of Anastasio Somoza's national guard who run the high command of the largest Contra force, known by the acronym FDN, stand to lose if they accept the moderates' demands.

As the Contras' political and military fortunes have declined in the past nine months, the fight for control of the movement has heated up. After the House of Representatives shelved the administration's aid plan in March, the divisions widened, and key moderate Arturo Cruz threatened to leave the rebel ranks. Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, told Mr. Cruz and the two other leaders of the civilian command to iron out their differences before Congress reconsiders aid next month.

As a sign of continuing administration concern over the talks, special Central America envoy Philip Habib visited the Contra leaders here yesterday.

A further splintering of Contra forces and failure to mend their image would doom Congressional aid and profoundly hamper the Reagan administration's Nicaragua policy. Washington wants to increase military pressure on the Sandinistas to ignite a popular insurrection or at least keep Managua off balance so it can't effectively aid guerrilla movements in neighboring countries. Without a credible Nicaraguan armed opposition, the administration believes, it faces two undesirable alternatives: direct invasion of Nicaragua or accommodation with the Sandinistas.

The Miami meeting pits Mr. Cruz and fellow moderate Alfonso Robelo against Adolfo Calero, who is closely identified with FDN military leader Enrique Bermudez, a former national guard colonel, and

a "Miami group" clique of former Nicaraguan landowners, politicians and Somoza business associates.

This "unholy alliance," as one aide to Mr. Cruz put it, has drawn the disapproval of congressional Republicans and Democrats who are considered swing votes. "Without Cruz and Robelo exercising some real authority, you can kiss aid goodbye," said Oklahoma Democratic Congressman Dave McCurdy, who sponsored the compromise \$27 million aid package that passed in Congress last year.

"We have a credibility problem," said Mr. Cruz, who noted that the three leaders are reviewing a General Accounting Office report that some U.S. humanitarian aid to the Contras can't be accounted for, leading to allegations that Contras or their associates siphoned off aid for their personal use or for weapons. "We should take the necessary measures to revamp the organization to make it more viable in the political arena," he argued.

Mr. Cruz is widely respected on Capitol Hill but commands no guerrillas, so even an arrangement worked out over a bargaining table might not be respected. Nicaraguan moderates close to the talks are pessimistic about the outcome.

"There may be a breakdown," said one. "There is a profound struggle going on about what kind of movement we are going to have. Bermudez will have to do a lot of explaining for his statements and actions"—including his publicly expressed scorn for the concept of taking orders from civilians. The moderates don't expect Mr. Bermudez to go down without a fight.

One administration official involved in Nicaragua policy is skeptical that moderates, even with State Department backing, could seriously reform the Contra organization because they are dependent on the former guardsmen for their military expertise. "It isn't as though Miami is full of generals," he said. He added that the administration was reticent about helping to oust Mr. Calero because of his long association with the Central Intelligence Agency.

William LeoGrande, an American University Nicaragua watcher and consultant to congressional Democrats, put it bluntly: "The key to any kind of success is to convince people who are at the core of the organization to get rid of themselves."

In Mr. LeoGrande's opinion, not only will the Contras lose in Congress if they fail to reform, they'll also continue to fail at "building a political base in Nicaragua itself."